# REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

## Rejections under 35 USC §112

The above amendments obviate the rejections under 35 USC §112, second paragraph.

## Rejections under 35 USC §101

The above amendments obviate the rejections under 35 USC §101, in as much as claims 5-11 now recite a computer system and claims 12-24 now recite an electronic object. Each of these items has substantial utility, as more fully disclosed in the specification.

## Rejections under 35 USC §102

Conklin et al., US Patent # 6,141,653 ("Conklin") discloses a multivariate negotiations engine for iterative bargaining which: enables a sponsor to create and administer a community between participants such as buyers and sellers having similar interests; allows a buyer/participant to search and evaluate seller information, propose and negotiate orders and counteroffers that include all desired terms, request sample quantities, and track activity; allows a seller/participant to use remote authoring templates to create a complete Website for immediate integration and activation in the community, to evaluate proposed buyer orders and counteroffers, and to negotiate multiple variables such as prices, terms, conditions etc., iteratively with a buyer. [Abstract]. However, Conklin does not teach how the negotiations engine may be configured to compare multiple seller information, from multiple sellers, to perform a print job project as recited in claim 1. Thus, claims 1-4 are patentable over Conklin.

Furthermore, the Conklin reference fails to teach that the vendor-specific characteristics define a print job project. That is, the Conklin reference does not disclose the vendor-specific terms to be defined, stored, and compared to ultimately have a print job project performed by a selected vendor.

Independent claims 5, 12 and 15 have features similar to those recited in claim 1. Therefore, at least for the reasons above, the remaining claims are patentable over Conklin.

## Rejections under 35 USC §103

Claims 3 and 14 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Conklin in view of Gottreid, US Patent number 6,076,076 ("Gottreid"). As articulated above, claim 3 is patentable over Conklin. Gottreid fails to cure the underlying deficiencies of Conklin, including the failure to teach a system that provides the comparison features discussed above. Hence, claim 3 is patentable over this combination of references. Claim 14 recites similar features to those found in claim 3 and is, therefore, likewise patentable over these references.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at 408-720-8300 if there remains any issue with allowance of this case.

*Charge our Deposit Account*

Please charge any shortage to our Deposit Account No. 02-2666.


Respectfully submitted,

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Date: _June 18_ , 2002      _____

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*In the Specification:*

Paragraph beginning at page 20, line 8 has been amended as follows:

Once customer 54 has created the job request 58, the vendors/service providers, 56a and 56b, can access the job request 58 to provide their own constraints/information. Thus, Web server 52 acts as an aggregation point for each user's job request information and allows customers to quickly decide upon a vendor for the job request. Remember that, although not shown in [detain] detail in the figure, each vendor will spawn an associated, personalized instance of the original job request 58. That is, vendor 56a will, after modifying and constraining the original job request 58, create a more fully constrained instance of that job request, which is stored at server 52. Such a vendor-personalized instance of the job request can be stored in memory at server 52 and associated in the database with the original job request 58. That way, when a customer 54 accesses the job request 58, he or she may be provided with information about the existence of the vendor-personalized instance(s) of the job request, each or all of which can be viewed individually or collectively (e.g., through customer interface 60) for comparison and additional mark-up (i.e., addition of further constraints, etc.).

*In the Claims:*

Claim 1-20 have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A computer-based method, comprising [collecting,] comparing a plurality of vendor specific instances of an electronic print job request object, each vendor specific instance of the print job request object to represent a relationship between a customer and one of a plurality of vendors to perform a print job project, each vendor specific instance of

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the print job request object defined through a series of iterative customer submissions and vendor responses to allow the customer to select one of the plurality of vendors to perform the print job project. [, sufficient information concerning a custom manufacturing project so as to produce a sufficiently constrained job request as to allow at least one of the vendors to submit a quote for the project.]

2. (Amended) The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the customer compares the plurality of vendor specific instances of the print job request object via a web interface. [submissions and responses are made through Web forms.]

3. (Amended) The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein the vendor responses being based on the customer submissions and the print job. [custom manufacturing project comprises a print job.]

4. (Amended) The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein [collecting] comparing comprises incrementally adding constraints to [an] each initially under-constrained vendor specific instance of the print job request object to produce [the] a sufficiently-constrained vendor specific instance of the print job request object.

5. (Amended) A computer[-based service] system configured to allow a customer and [one or more] a plurality of vendors to interact with one another in defining a plurality of vendor specific instances of a electronic print job request object [a task description] for a [custom manufacturing] print job project by permitting the customer to compare [specify], in an initially under-constrained fashion, each vendor specific instance of the print job request object [task description] and further permitting the vendors and the customer to successively develop each vendor specific instance of the print job request object [task description] to a fully-constrained form through an iterative process in which one or more constraints on one

of the vendor specific instances the print job request object [task description] are added, removed and/or modified during each iteration.

6. (Amended) The computer[-based service] system of claim 5 wherein the customer is further permitted to vary information regarding each of the vendor specific instances the electronic print job request object [task description] on a vendor-by-vendor basis.

7. (Amended) The computer[-based service] system of claim 5 wherein the fully-constrained form of at least one of the vendor specific instances of the electronic print job request object represents a binding contractual obligation between the customer and at least one of the plurality of vendors. [task description includes payment and delivery terms.]

8. (Amended) The computer[-based service] system of claim 5 wherein the customer and the vendors interact through a series of notification messages transmitted via a Web server.

9. (Amended) The computer[-based service] system of claim 8 wherein the Web server is configured to store each vendor-specific instance[s] of the print job request object [task description], each accessible by the customer.

10. (Amended) The computer[-based service] system of claim 9 wherein the Web server is further configured to provide vendor-specific views of each the initially under-constrained print job request object [task description] specified by the customer.

11. (Amended) The computer[-based service] system of claim 10 wherein the Web server is further configured to provide a customer-oriented view of multiple ones of the vendor-specific instances of [the task description] the print job request object upon request.

12. (Amended) A computer-based vendor specific instance of an electronic print job request object [task description], comprising a set of constraints arrived at through an iterative process in which a customer and [one or more] a plurality of vendors successively define criteria for completing [the task] a print job project task defined by the print job request

object [description], the criteria including payment and delivery terms sufficient to support a binding contractual obligation.

13. (Amended) The computer-based vendor specific instance of the electronic print job request object [task description] of claim 12 wherein the print job project [task] comprises a different pricing structure for each vendor based on at least bindings, covers, and delivery schedules. [custom manufacturing job].

14. (Amended) The computer-based vendor specific instance of the print job request object [task description] of claim 12 wherein the vendor defined criteria is based on the customer defined criteria and the print job project. [task comprises a print job.]

15. (Amended) A Web server having one or more user interfaces [configured] to allow a customer and [one or more] a plurality of vendors to define one or more vendor specific instances of a electronic print request object [task description] for a [custom manufacturing] print job project, the user interfaces configured to allow the customer and the vendors to connect with the web server [by] permitting the customer to compare [specify], in an initially under[]-constrained fashion, [the task description] each vendor specific instance of the print job request object and further permitting the vendors and the customer to successively develop each request object [the task description] to a fully[ ]-constrained form through an iterative process in which one or more constraints on the vendor specific instances of the print job request object [task description] are added, removed and/or modified during each iteration.

16. (Amended) The Web server of claim 15 wherein the customer and the vendors are permitted to add, remove and/or modify the vendor specific instances of the print job request object [task description] through the use of Web forms interacting with the web server.

17. (Amended) The Web server of claim 16 further comprising a notification engine configured within the web server, the notification engine to provide notification messages to the customer and the vendors, as appropriate, upon an indication that at least one of the vendor specific instances of the print job request object [task description] has been modified in some way.

18. (Amended) The Web server of claim 17 [further comprising] wherein the user interfaces further comprise one or more vendor-specific interfaces through which vendor-specific ones of the instances of the print job request object [task description] are provided to the vendors.

19. (Amended) The Web server of claim 18 [further comprising] wherein the user interfaces further comprise a customer interface through which a common customer view of one or more of the vendor-specific instances of the print job request object [task description] are provided.

20. (Amended) The Web server of claim 19 wherein the customer interface is configured to allow [a] the comparison of the one or more vendor-specific instances of the request object [task description].

21. (New) A method of comparing proposals from a plurality of vendors comprising:

   defining, through a series of iterative customer submissions and vendor responses, information concerning a print job project, the information being stored in a plurality of vendor-specific instances of a print job object; and

   comparing two or more vendor-specific instances of the print job object to select one of the plurality of vendors to perform the print job project.

22. (New) The method of claim 21 wherein the vendor-specific instance of the print job object of the vendor to be selected is a binding contractual obligation between the customer and the selected one of the plurality of vendors.